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Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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2012

# Singer's Handbook, Second Edition

Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus

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# **Singer's Handbook**

## **Mission Statement**

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus is dedicated to producing vocal music of high quality in the rich tradition of men's choral singing. We seek through song not only to entertain, but to enlighten. We sing to create harmony as we celebrate pride in the community and in ourselves.



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Second edition

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## 1. Welcome

*To new members, I would like to welcome you to an experience that will lead to lasting friendships and wonderful memories. To our returning members, thank you for your constant dedication to the mission of the BGMC.*

*In 2012, we celebrated 10 years as part of the musical culture of WNY and we represented Buffalo at the GALA Festival in Denver. Where we are headed now is even more exciting.*

*The BGMC has always been more than a premier men's choral group. This chorus allows you to be yourself, to grow as an individual, to make friends, and to share YOUR story. Through visibility and song, as gay and gay-affirming men, we enlighten hearts and minds. Our music changes people's lives. You are going to love this group as much as I do. Together we will have some of the most inspiring and moving experiences of our lives.*

*--Gregory Ciupak, President*

*Let me take this opportunity to warmly welcome you to The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. Whether you are a returning or a new member, you will find this year a rewarding experience. We are committed to excellence in choral singing while being a positive force in the lives of individuals and our community.*

*I am excited to start another season with the chorus. Each year provides a new and remarkable experience. I look forward to what the new year has to offer.*

*I encourage you to lose yourself in the fellowship, friendship, and, of course, spectacular music. Experience the power of men united through voices as we change the lives of our audiences and members. Let's make great music together as brothers in song.*

*--Ciaran Krueger, Artistic Director*

## 2. Who We Are

*Songs are funny things. They can slip across borders. Proliferate in prisons. Penetrate hard shells. I always believed that the right song at the right moment could change history. --Pete Seeger*

### A. Brief History

The BGMC was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and the by-laws were adopted by the board of directors on January 15, 2001.

We were preceded in the mid-1980s a group of singing gay men and women who formed the Queen City Chorus, later called the City of Good Neighbors Chorale. It survived into the mid-1990s.

In 1999, Mike Rogers, a former Buffalonian working as Director of Fundraising for the Gay and Lesbian Association (GALA) of Choruses International, called Roger Parris in Kenmore and urged him to establish a new gay chorus in Western New York.

A small group of friends first met on January 16, 2000 and composed a brief mission statement. On March 26, 2000, five members of the group hosted an open meeting at the Crane Branch Library at 633 Elmwood Ave. in Buffalo. The concept of forming a men's chorus and a board of directors was presented to an audience of thirty men and women.

A Steering Committee formed what quickly became the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus. The new men's chorus would be a volunteer-lead organization, directed by a nine-member elected board of directors with three-year-long terms. Musical decisions would be made by a salaried Artistic Director. A set of by-laws borrowed from an existing choral organization served as the framework for our structure.

Out of a short list of potential candidates, the board appointed Ms. Barbara Wagner as our first Artistic Director. Ms. Wagner held auditions during the summer of 2001. The first rehearsal of the BGMC was held on a terrible day: September 11, 2001. From the original 35 singers, eighteen are still performing with us in 2012. Ms. Wagner retired in June 2011.

Our new Artistic Director, chosen through an inclusive process involving all members, is Ciaran Krueger, a young man with deeply-rooted singing and choral directing experience. Ciaran earned a Master's of Music in Choral Conducting from SUNY Buffalo.

The BGMC has sung more than 30 full concerts, commissioned a number of compositions and performed on Buffalo radio and television, in churches, synagogues, schools, community centers, summer festivals, and in Kleinhans Music Hall with the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. The chorus has performed numerous benefits for other organizations and is active in gay and other community events, among them AIDS Walks, Pride parades, the Elmwood Festival of the Arts, and Buffalo Bisons baseball games.

We have been honored with awards from the Empire State Pride Agenda/Embrace WNY, the Arts Council of Buffalo and Erie County, Artvoice, and AIDS Community Services. We performed to great acclaim at the GALA Festivals in 2004 and 2008 and we participated in the 2012 GALA Festival in Denver.

Learn more about our history at our website:

**[www.buffalogaymenschorus.org](http://www.buffalogaymenschorus.org).**  
Click on the HISTORY tab.

### 3. What We Do

*I don't sing because I'm happy; I'm happy because I sing. --William James*

#### A. Typical Concert Schedule

Our chorus has two seasons, fall and spring. The fall season begins at the end of August, culminating in a concert performed on three consecutive nights, usually the second week of December. The spring season begins in January and ends in May, likewise culminating in a concert performed on three consecutive nights, usually in mid-May.

Concerts are always held on weekends, with Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday afternoon or early evening performances in three different venues. These concert performances are mandatory. But that's it for mandatory. Singers are not obligated to appear at other performances.

#### B. Other Performances

What about those other performances? There are usually two or three of these outside concerts or "run out" gigs every season. While they are not mandatory, we hope that as many of you as possible can participate, as **these events are central to our mission.**

For example, in the spring of 2011, we sang in a local high school on behalf of Gay & Lesbian Youth Services (GLYS). Although many singers could not join us, our presence was very meaningful for that young audience.

We are often invited by SUNY Fredonia to perform during their Diversity Week. And we always march in Buffalo Pride Parade and sing at the rally afterwards.



## **C. Sign Language Interpreters**

*Signs are to eyes what words are to ears. --Ken Glickman*

In an effort to be welcoming and inclusive to all, a professional American Sign Language interpreter is hired to interpret for deaf and hearing-impaired audience members, typically the Sunday performance of our December and May concerts.

## **D. Chorus Fundraisers**

Chorus fundraisers are fun events, outside of our concert schedule, that are not mandatory. In the past, we have organized spaghetti dinners, cabarets, and other informal events which include a little singing. These earn income that supports our mission.

## **E. Community Benefit Performances**

The chorus is often asked to perform at events to benefit good causes. We accept these invitations on a case-by-case basis.

## **F. Media**

*Music can change the world because it can change people. --Bono*

Media invitations offer additional opportunities for community outreach. The chorus is often invited to perform live for local radio and morning TV talk shows. Be sure to read our publicity policy (section 6H) on page 26.

## **G. GALA Choruses**

**[www.galachoruses.org](http://www.galachoruses.org)**

We like to think that the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus is special, and we are. But we are not unique. GALA Choruses (Gay And Lesbian Association of Choruses, Inc.) formed in 1982, is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit organization serving the GLBT choral movement, with a mission to support GLBT choruses and to change our world through song.

We have been a proud member of GALA Choruses since our first season in 2001. A portion of your BGMC dues go to GALA Choruses in order to maintain our BGMC membership and your individual memberships, as GALA Choruses supports itself through dues.

GALA reports 150-plus member choruses and 7,500 singers, with membership open to all GLBT and GLBT-allied choruses. Member choruses are located throughout North America, Europe, South America, Africa, and Australia, and range from 5 to 250 singers.

Through workshops, festivals, networking, and administrative support, GALA Choruses fosters the continued artistic and organizational growth of its member choruses.

The GALA Choruses website has a list of member choruses and their websites and concert schedules should you be traveling. We encourage you to subscribe to one of the GALA Choruses e-mail lists:

[www.galachoruses.org/programs/email/email\\_lists.html](http://www.galachoruses.org/programs/email/email_lists.html)

## **H. GALA Festivals**

*It was like meeting 4,000 cousins you never knew you had. --BGMC member*

The BGMC has performed at GALA Festivals in Montreal (2004) and Miami (2008), and in July of 2012, we traveled to Denver.

Performing in the magnificent concert halls of host cities to enthusiastic audiences of other singers, hearing the music of our brother and sister choruses, and experiencing the transformational power of the GLBT choral movement is exhilarating. Singers have said that their Festival experiences stay with them for a lifetime.

## **4. How We Govern Ourselves**

*The important work of moving the world forward does not wait to be done by perfect men. - George Eliot*

The Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus is incorporated by the State of New York as a nonprofit membership organization. As such, the BGMC is governed by member-approved by-laws that specify our governing structure. The by-laws are online in the Singer section of our website.

The BGMC is subject to all federal, state, and local laws governing the operation of not-for-profit corporations. Members of the board of directors are the legal officers of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, Inc.

## **A. Board Structure**

The nine-member board of directors is responsible for:

- Planning
- Setting policy
- Hiring, firing, and supervising employees
- Making all administrative and financial decisions governing the operations of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus.

Board service is a three-year, unpaid, volunteer role. Any chorus member in good standing may run for a seat on the board.

You, the members, vote for the board by secret ballot. Elections are held at the annual member meeting of the BGMCM, Inc. The annual meeting is usually built into our "wrap" party after the spring concert.

The board of directors then elects from its ranks the officers: the president, vice-president, and secretary, who also serve for one-year terms.

A treasurer, appointed by the Board of Directors, manages the financial affairs of the chorus and serves under the supervision of the Board.

## **B. Board Meetings**

The board meets, with occasional exceptions, on the third Wednesday of every month. We invite you to attend, as an observer, any regularly scheduled board meeting. Emergency and "executive session" meetings are closed to observers.

Attending board meetings helps you understand how decisions are made and why. More importantly, observers at board meetings say they come away with a deepened appreciation for the efforts and time of those who serve on our board.

## **5. What We Offer to You**

### **A. Artistic Director & Accompanist**

*Being a conductor is kind of a hybrid profession because most fundamentally, it is being someone who is a coach, a trainer, an editor, a director. --Michael Tilson Thomas*

The Artistic Director (AD) is an employee of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus and is appointed by the board of directors to provide musical leadership for the chorus. The Artistic Director is authorized to make such decisions as:

- Singer auditions
- Voice placement
- Programming
- Musical interpretation

The board of directors, acting under the BGMCM by-laws, is the ultimate decision-making authority. When musical matters are involved, the Artistic Director acts in consultation with the board.

At every rehearsal is a piano accompanist who works with the Artistic Director to help you learn the music. Debi Overton, our accompanist, is supervised by the Artistic Director.

### **B. Section Leaders**

Section leaders are appointed by the Artistic Director and the board and are strongly encouraged to attend board meetings. They operate in a manner analogous to the Principal or 1<sup>st</sup> chair in professional orchestras.

Section leaders, under the leadership of the Artistic Director, provide direct musical guidance to section members. We encourage you to bring musical questions, attendance issues, or other concerns to your section leader. He can usually supply quick and knowledgeable answers without interrupting the Artistic Director, especially during rehearsals.

Read your section leader's e-mail and let him know right away when you are unable to attend a rehearsal.

## **C. Buddy System**

*It's very difficult for me to dislike an artist. No matter what he's creating, the fact that he's experiencing the joy of creation makes me feel like we're in a brotherhood of some kind...we're in it together. --Chick Corea*

As a new member, you will be partnered with a veteran singer to orient you through your first semester. There is more to the BGMC than singing and your chorus Buddy will explain all that's happening in the life of the chorus. The Buddy system is organized by the Merry Committee (more below).

Veteran singers, we're counting on you to volunteer for Buddy service and help welcome new singers.

## **D. Music**

After your audition, our music librarian will assign you a number for the duration of your membership. You will get a binder with this number filled with a set of music. As new pieces are introduced to the chorus, they will be numbered before distribution. You just pull the copy with your number and add it to your binder.

Binders are collected from each member after the fall and spring concerts. Music provided for concerts is the property of the BGMC, and all of it must be returned with your binders. You are financially responsible for any lost music.

When you return for the next semester, your binder will be filled with new music for the next concert.

## **E. Polo Shirts**

Polo shirts with the embroidered BGMC logo are available for \$30-\$35, depending on market rates and the size of the order. Your first BGMC polo shirt is half price, a one-time-only discount for new singers. All subsequent shirts are full price, even if you withdraw from the chorus and return at a later date. Polo shirts are usually ordered once per semester.

Here is the cost breakdown:

- The shirt ranges from \$20- \$25
- The BGMC logo costs about \$10
- Tax and shipping are extra

## **F. eBlast**

The weekly eBlast contains important instructions about where and when to show up and what to be wearing and carrying. Reading it reduces the amount of time that has to be spent on announcements during rehearsal.

Develop the habit of reading the weekly eBlasts. This will avoid using valuable rehearsal time for questions that have probably already been answered.

If you do not have access to e-mail, it is your responsibility to obtain the eBlasts and your section leader's e-mails from a friend in the chorus.

## **G. Crescendo**

The BGMC newsletter, *Crescendo*, is published twice a year, prior to our December and May concerts. *Crescendo* keeps our audience up-to-date about concert dates and chorus happenings and serves to create excitement about all things BGMC.

Prime your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers to buy concert tickets by adding their names to the *Crescendo* mailing list. Please give their address(es), both postal and e-mail, to the chorus member who maintains our mailing list.

## **H. Regular Rehearsals**

Rehearsals are held on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm sharp. Responsibility for bringing refreshments for break time rotates among the four sections. Aim your GPS or online mapping service to:

St. John's-Grace Episcopal Church  
51 Colonial Circle  
Buffalo, NY 14222

## **I. Website: [buffalogaymenschorus.org](http://buffalogaymenschorus.org)**

You will be given a user name and password to access the Singers section of the website. It includes:



- The membership list
- BGMC by-laws
- Advertising rates for concert programs
- Leadership contact information
- E-blast archives
- Downloadable copies of the Singer's Handbook
- Practice MP3 files of the full scores of each piece, as well as MP3 files for each voice part. Our volunteers spend a huge amount of time and effort producing these custom files so please be patient they are not all immediately available.

Please friend us on Facebook, too!

## **J. Concert CDs**

Every singer who performs in a concert gets one copy of the concert CD at a reduced rate. Additional CDs cost \$10 each. They make terrific gifts and can be ordered through our website or purchased at our concerts and gigs.

## **K. Merry Committee**

Since rehearsal time has to be devoted to, well, rehearsing, the Merry Committee is charged with organizing opportunities for hanging out, schmoozing, cruising, and basically enjoying each other's company. If you enjoy organizing outings and get-togethers, you're a natural for the Merry Committee. Its goals are to:

- Schedule at least one function per month
- Foster relationships within the BGMC community and develop inexpensive social events
- Manage the Buddy System for new singers

- Recognize important events, dates, and milestones in the lives of members
- Run a weekly 50/50 drawing
- Watch your eBlast for Merry Committee updates and events.

## 6. What We Expect of You

*By building relations we create a source of love and personal pride and belonging that makes living in a chaotic world easier. --Susan Lieberman*

Singers agree to act in accordance with policies set forth in this handbook and with the by-laws adopted by the board of directors of the BGMC.

### A. Attendance Policy

*Eighty percent of success is showing up. —Woody Allen*

Attendance at rehearsals is the most important contribution you make to our musical success. Rehearsals are where we come together, receive instruction from the Artistic Director, listen to one another, and form ourselves into one unified choral ensemble. This happens best when all are present.

Obviously, work and family conflicts will arise. Illness or other personal difficulties may interfere with your ability to attend rehearsals. Our attendance policy seeks to balance the chorus's need to have you present with your need for flexibility when schedule conflicts occur. The purpose is to treat all BGMC members fairly as we strive to prepare as a group for our performances.

- **What if I need to miss a rehearsal or arrive late?**

If you must miss a rehearsal or arrive late, please alert your section leader as soon as possible. This keeps him informed with what's happening in his section and enables him keep you up to date. If you miss a rehearsal, please make a special effort to attend the next sectional practice. Repeated tardiness or early departures from rehearsal will be counted against your attendance.

- **How many rehearsals can I miss?**

Attendance at **80% of regular rehearsals** is necessary in order to perform in each concert. A regular rehearsal is defined as any rehearsal that takes place **before** Production Week. Specific numbers of rehearsals and allowed absences will be provided with each semester's rehearsal schedule, enclosed in your music folder.

- **Production Week Rehearsals**

A Production Week rehearsal is defined as any rehearsal that takes place during the week leading up to any major concert series. It is a crucial stage in every major concert series. Attendance at all Production Week rehearsals is mandatory.

- **Attendance at Concerts**

If you plan to sing in a major concert series, you must be able to attend all 3 performances. This is important to the individual sections and the unity of the chorus as a whole.

- **What if I have special circumstances that affect my attendance?**

For an attendance policy to be meaningful it has to be applied evenly and fairly. That said, fairness might require that special circumstances be taken into consideration. If you anticipate something that could interfere with rehearsals, consult with your section leader as soon as possible.

Section leaders, the Artistic Director, and the board of directors will work with as much flexibility as possible to accommodate those who make a good faith effort to attend rehearsals and prepare for concert performances.

## **B. Dues Policy**

- **Dues**

Dues are set by the board and are subject to change based on the financial obligations of the organization. Dues for all BGMC members, both singing and non-singing, are \$60 per semester. Please submit all payments to the dues & attendance secretary. Checks should be made out to BGMC.

- **Payment deadline**

Payment in full is expected within 30 days of joining the chorus or starting a semester.

- **Installment payments**

If you are unable to pay your dues in one lump sum, you may work out a payment plan with the dues secretary. Please set up your payment plan within the 30-day grace period.

- **Financial Assistance**

We do not want anyone to leave the chorus because of financial challenges. If you cannot afford your dues, please speak with the dues secretary about financial assistance. All conversations with the dues secretary will be kept confidential.

- **Refunds**

If you have paid all or part of your dues and must leave the chorus, you may be eligible for a full or partial refund.

- If you withdraw before the halfway point in the semester, AND return all your music, your dues will be fully refunded.
- If you withdraw after the halfway point in the semester but before the concerts, AND return all of your music, your dues minus \$25 will be refunded.
- If you must withdraw after the halfway point in the semester for especially compelling reasons (for example, moving away from Western New York, developing a serious illness, becoming the primary caregiver for someone with a serious illness, or similar emergencies) AND return all of your music, your dues will be fully refunded.

## **C. Tuxedos**

*We put on formal wear and suddenly we become extraordinary. --Vera Nazarian*

Every singer is expected to purchase a tuxedo ensemble, including vests and ties, that match those of the other chorus members. We will direct you to our preferred tuxedo store. The estimated cost is \$170. If financial hardship precludes you from purchasing a tuxedo, please speak to your section leader.

## **D. Ensemble Responsibilities**

We all share the responsibility of keeping our chorus operating in an efficient and productive manner. This means establishing some policies and rules and we are counting on you to take them seriously.

As members of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, we are ambassadors for the organization. Our conduct reflects upon the chorus's reputation and influences its ability to attract new members, concert patrons, and financial supporters.

Accordingly, we conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner during all chorus functions and strive for a culture of mutual respect. Members of the chorus shall refrain from any disruptive activity during chorus functions.

- **Be a Member in Good Standing**

The bylaws of the BGMC define a member in good standing as someone who has met the financial and conduct policies and responsibilities written by the board of directors and the Artistic Director.

- **Attendance is essential**

You are important to the success of the BGMC and we value your participation in the chorus. Your chorus team depends on you to be at rehearsal to get the job done. Absenteeism and tardiness create problems for your Artistic Director, your section, and your chorus.

- **Rehearse your music**

*The only thing better than singing is more singing.* --Ella Fitzgerald

The Artistic Director may ask you to practice one or more pieces of music or sections of music at home during the week. Please do so. When asked to memorize music, you will have steady progress by working on it between rehearsals.

## **E. Rehearsal Conduct**

*Some days there won't be a song in your heart. Sing anyway.* --Emory Austin

Each of us is responsible for the tone and mood at rehearsals. The atmosphere is more pleasant when we:

- Respect the Artistic Director's decisions regarding the tempo, breath markings, or dynamic phrasing of a piece

- Understand that talking and whispering distract the person at the podium and interfere with other singers' concentration and progress
- Refrain from negative comments, even when the guy in the next seat makes the same mistake several times in a row
- Use our powers to heal and not harm

### **Singers, please:**

- Be punctual for rehearsals
- Be prepared both vocally and physically
- Listen to your section leader's advice
- Bring a pencil
- Wear your name tag
- Turn off or silence all hand-held devices
- **No texting or cell-phone use**
- Step outside of the rehearsal room for emergency calls
- Turn the pages of your music quietly
- Limit announcements to break time
- Pitch in when it is your section's turn to bring snacks and clean up after rehearsal
- Put your chair away after each rehearsal
- And finally, no cologne, please

At rehearsals, announcements will be delivered by a board member or a delegate chosen by the board. If you have an announcement, please deliver it to the announcer before the beginning of rehearsal. Items not meeting announcement criteria may be forwarded to the membership via the eBlast.

### **Dress rehearsals**

The purpose of a dress rehearsal is to prepare the chorus for a concert performance in a specific venue. Tuxedos or concert apparel are **not required** for dress rehearsals

The Artistic Director and/or chorus marshals line up and move singers on and off stage in a professional and orderly manner, ensuring that we are appealing and attractive while on stage.

### **Singers, please:**

- Arrange your music in concert order before the dress rehearsal
- Quietly pay attention to and quietly follow the marshals and/or Artistic Director's directions
- Remember your place in the line-up and on the risers
- Remember who is standing next to you
- Turn in ticket money and unsold tickets if you have not already done so

### **After rehearsals**

After most rehearsals, many singers gather at a one of the local restaurants (usually Mythos or Pano's on Elmwood) to socialize over a bite to eat and get caught up with what's happening in the chorus. Please, please join us!

## **F. Performance Conduct**

For our audience, concert enjoyment is about combined vocal and visual performance. A concert CD may sound flawless but a live performance offers much more pleasure.

And like it or not, an audience judges a choral performance on more than what it hears. It also judges by what it sees. Your appearance and behavior on stage have a strong influence on audience perception and enjoyment.



So smile! If we want to heal hearts and make feet tap, our audience should see that we enjoy singing together. Please make every effort to look comfortable, relaxed, and at ease, even if you have to fake it. When we look relaxed, the audience relaxes and becomes receptive to our song. When we smile, the audience feels our enthusiasm and is primed to enjoy the concert.

Please remember that a key word for any choral endeavor is *blend*. We must all blend not only in voice to please the ear, but also in dress to please the eye.

### **Before leaving home on concert day:**

- Clean and press your tux
- Wash and press your shirt
- Shine your shoes
- Remove jewelry above the neck or on the wrist
- Remove watches
- Skip the cologne and other scented products
- Skip embellishments on your tux; this is not the time to wear your beloved grandmother's brooch
- Bring post-concert treats, if it is your section's turn

### **Arriving at the venue:**

- "Call time" is when you are expected to be on the riser with music in order, ready to sing
- Arrive well before call time in order to find the entrance into the venue, drop off post-concert treats, find dressing rooms and restrooms, take your place in line and on stage, etc.
- Save the parking spaces closest to the entrance for our audience

## **When lining up to go on stage:**

- Maintain silence and decorum
- Turn off all electronic devices or leave them backstage
- Cooperate with chorus marshals and/or the Artistic Director by *quietly* listening to instructions

## **While on stage:**

*When I'm on stage, I'm trying to do one thing: bring people joy. Just like church does. People don't go to church to find trouble, they go there to lose it. --James Brown*

- Smile, it puts the audience at ease
- Focus on the Artistic Director; no cruising the audience
- Open and close your music in unison
- Maintain silence in between songs
- Maintain silence and decorum while others are performing
- Focus on soloists & guest artists when they are performing; no cruising the audience
- Applaud soloists or guest artists only if directed to do so by the AD; a big smile in the direction of the performer after his/her performance is fine
- Disregard the sign language interpreter who may be alongside the risers at some performances
- Watch the AD for cues on when to bow as bowing should be in unison
- Keep your eye on the AD as bowing may happen more than once
- Did we mention no cruising the audience?

## **After the concert:**

- Please stay and socialize with the audience at post-concert receptions

- Join in the post-concert meet & greet line-up if asked  
Please remain in your tux or other designated concert attire when attending post-concert receptions
- After the last concert of the series, please turn in your binder to the music librarian; it's expensive!
- Turn in ticket money and unsold tickets

## **G. Use of Chorus Name**

Chorus members shall **not** perform under the name of the chorus or claim to represent or speak for the chorus in any manner or media outlet without explicit approval of the president of the chorus.

## **H. Publicity**

*Publicity can be terrible. But only if you don't have any. --Jane Russell*

By joining the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, you are granting permission for the chorus to use, publish, and display your name, image, photograph, voice, or other likeness, without notification, review, approval, or compensation, in organs of media including but not limited to concert programs, recordings, advertisements, radio and television appearances, and the internet, for purposes of promotion and marketing of the chorus.

## **I. Confidentiality**

Members' names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses are not to be given to individuals who are not chorus members and may not be used for business or for other purposes unrelated to the BGMC.

## **J. Substance Abuse Policy**

If you are present at any rehearsal, performance, or other official chorus function exhibiting behavior that has been adversely affected by alcohol or drugs (prescribed or otherwise), we may remove you from that particular function. It may also lead to termination of your membership.

## **7. How You Can Help**

*Real charity doesn't care if it's tax-deductible or not. --Dan Bennett*

### **A. Money**

Dues provide only a small fraction of the BGMC budget. Likewise, income from ticket sales brings in only about 1/3 of BGMC's total budget. The hard fact is that it takes many more dollars than we earn from dues and ticket sales to purchase music, pay our Artistic Director and accompanist, rent our office, advertise our concerts, record our CDs, and sustain the work and mission of the BGMC.

The treasurer can advise you on how to make a tax-deductible contribution or establish a planned giving program.

### **B. Time**

Support us with your time by:

- Distributing concert posters to local businesses
- Helping mail out the *Crescendo* newsletter, the aptly named twice a year lick-n-stick get together
- Organizing fundraising projects
- Serving on a BGMC committee

- Running for a seat on the board of directors
- Staffing the BGMC table at the Pride Celebration (first weekend in June) or the Elmwood Avenue Festival of the Arts (last weekend in August)

## **C. Word of Mouth**

Support us with your powers of persuasion by:

- Recruiting new singers
- Recruiting non-singing volunteers
- Selling ads for our concert programs
- Selling tickets to our concerts
- 

## **D. Friends of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (FOBGMC)**

From the beginning, we understood that charitable donations would be crucial to the survival of the BGMC. Thus, the birth of the Friends of the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus (FOBGMC) in the fall of 2001.

Simply put, the FOBGMC was formed to ask folks to support the mission of the chorus with their dollars. The Friends are wonderful people who write checks to the BGMC because they love our music and believe in our mission, and for no other reason. Well, okay, they bask in the glory of seeing their names printed in the concert programs on the FOBGMC pages.

How does the FOBGMC raise money? In three ways: an annual fundraising letter is mailed out in October; a donation form appears in *Crescendo*, and donation envelopes are inserted in concert programs.

But why wait for any of those? You can donate at any time to FOBGMC. You've added your voice to the BGMC mission; we encourage you to add your dollars to the FOBGMC as well.

Your contribution means your name is printed in the concert program twice: once on the singers' page and again on the FOBGMC donor pages. Your donation may be in honor of someone or in memory of someone. Be creative!

## **E. Archives**

*Archivists make it last longer.* --Anonymous

Documenting our history has been a priority since our beginning. A volunteer archivist maintains our collection of concert programs, posters, reviews, meeting minutes, memorabilia, etc., and welcomes your contributions. You can help by donating clippings, programs, posters, reviews, articles, pictures, videos, and stage props.

## **8. The End**

*Life is not so much about beginnings and endings as it is about going on and on and on. It is about muddling through the middle.* --Anna Quindlen

Thank you for reading all the way to the last page! Send your suggestions and feedback for the next edition to Cynthia Van Ness at: [bettybarcode@yahoo.com](mailto:bettybarcode@yahoo.com)

